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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes droputs, transfers, and failures from the class of 1990 in Pennsylvania public schools. The total enrollment for Pennsylvania public schools in 1986-87 was 139,761, in 1987-88 was 133,449, in 1988-89 was 123,717, and in 1989-90 was 115,400. Over 40% of Black and Hispanic students who were in regular ninth-grade classes in Pennsylvania public schools in 1986-87 were not seniors when their classmates reached the 12th grade in 1989-90. The comparable attrition for White ninth-graders was 13%. Twelve percent of Black and 11% of Hispanic ninth-grade students withdrew before grade 10, compared to 3% of the White tenth-graders. The attrition rate for all ninth-graders was 21%. Of students who reached the 10th grade, 20% of the Blacks, 19% of the Hispanics, and 5% of the Whites did not move on with their classmates to the 11th grade. Of students who reached the 11th grade, 21% of the Blacks, 17% of the Hispanics, and 5% of the Whites did not become seniors with their classmates. There is substantial evidence that Black, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander students who did not continue to the next grade were far more likely than White students to drop out. These minority families were less likely to have the economic resources required to transfer their children to private or parochial high schools. There was no net exodus of these minority families from Pennsylvania. Grade repetition was found to be relatively infrequent occurrence in high school in Pennsylvania. Statistical data are presented in one table. (SLD)

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March 23, 1990

DROPOUTS, TRANSFERS AND FAILURES FROM THE CLASS OF 1990 ALL PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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FINDINGS

1. Over 40% of both Black and Hispanic students who were in regular ninth grade classes in Pennsylvania public schools in 1986-87 were not seniors in the State public high schools when their classmates reached the senior year in 1989-90. Specifically, 44%, or 8,448, of the Black students and 40%, or 1,103, of the Hispanic students did not reach the twelfth grade in Pennsylvania public high schools with their classmates. The comparable attrition for White ninth graders was 13%. The attrition rate for all ninth graders was 21%. Dropouts from among Special Education students must be added to these numbers.

2. Twelve percent (12%) of the Black and 11% of the Hispanic ninth graders withdrew before the tenth grade, compared to 3% of the White tenth graders. The great majority of ninth and tenth graders are age 14 and 15 who if they are out of school are in violation of the state's Compulsory School Attendance Law unless they have a Farm or Domestic Service Permit certifying that there is an "urgent need for the child's services" at home or on the farm during school hours. These minority dropouts totaled 2,312 Black students and 292 Hispanic students.

3. Of students who reached the tenth grade, the following proportions did not move on with their classmates to the eleventh grade: Blacks 20%, Hispanics 19%, and Whites 5%.

4. Of students who reached the eleventh grade, the following percentages did not become seniors with their classmates: Blacks 21%, Hispanics 17%, and Whites 5%.

5. There is substantial evidence to suggest that the Black, Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander students who do not continue to the next grade are far more likely than White students to be dropouts, who fail to graduate from high school. The facts are that--

   a. These minority families were much less likely than White families to have the economic resources required to transfer their children to private or parochial high schools.

   b. There was no net exodus of these minority families out of Pennsylvania.

   c. Grade repeating in high schools is a relatively infrequent occurrence.

UD 028 165

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DROPOUTS, TRANSFERS AND FAILURES+ FROM THE CLASS OF 1990

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	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pacific Islander		Total	
	Enrollment	Withdrawal+	Enrollment	Withdrawal+	Enrollment	Withdrawal+	Enrollment	Withdrawal+	Enrollment	Withdrawal+
Grade Level	No.	No. %*	No.	No. %*	No.	No. %*	No.	No. %*	No.	No. %*
As 9th graders (1986-87)	116,073		19,029		2,748		1,784		139,761	
Dropped out, transferred, or failed		-3,806 -3%		-2,312 -12%		-292 -11%				-6,312 -5%
As 10th graders (1987-88)	112,267		16,717		2,456		1,895		133,449	
Dropped out, transferred, or failed		-5,985 -5%		-3,300 -20%		-473 -19%				-9,732 -7%
As 11th graders (1988-89)	106,282		13,417		1,983		1,929		123,717	
Dropped out, transferred, or failed		-5,086 -5%		-2,836 -21%		-338 -17%		-45		-8,317 -7%
As 12th graders (1989-90)	101,196		10,581		1,645		1,884		115,400	
TOTAL: Dropped out, Transferred, or failed		-14,877 -13%**		-8,448 -44%**		-1,103 -40%**		-45 -2%**		-24,361 -21%**

FOOTNOTES

+"Dropouts, Transfers, and Failures," i.e., "Withdrawals," consist of pupils (excluding Special Education) who either stopped going to school, transferred out of Pennsylvania public school systems to non-public schools or out of state, or who failed courses and were not promoted to the next grade with their class. The Compulsory School Attendance Law of Pennsylvania says that, with rare exception, pupils are to be in school until age 17 unless they are age 16 and have a job and permission to leave school. Pregnancy and maternity per se are not legally permissible reasons for dropping out of school. Special Education students cannot be included in this type of analysis, and constitute 4% of the secondary students in State public schools fall 1989.

*These percentages are the result of dividing the decline in number of pupils enrolled as the Class progressed from one grade to the next by racial group's enrollment in the earlier grade.

**This percent consists of the total withdrawals divided by that race's enrollment in 9th grade.

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Data Services: "Listing of Public School Enrollments by County, Administrative Unit, School, Grade and Race," 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89, 1989-90 (printouts)